

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S CHRONICLE

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A quarterly newsletter provided by Catapult Learning, *The Superintendent's Chronicle* offers Catholic school leaders at the chancery-level current insights, ideas, and information about the landscape of Catholic schools and helpful tools for addressing emerging challenges.

CLS 2025 Phoenix: A Festive National Celebration

250 diocesan central office leaders and a variety of national partners were recently in the desert southwest for the annual Catholic Leadership Summit (CLS), organized by the NCEA. Catapult Learning, along with Sadlier Publishing, Flynn O'Hara Uniforms, and Blackbaud co-hosted an evening under the stars at the world renowned Heard Museum. Following self-tours of the museum, attendees enjoyed a buffet dinner while Native music was performed.



CLS 2026 will be held in Grand Rapids, MI, October 18-21, 2026 at the Amway Grand Hotel in downtown Grand Rapids.



Recent Changes Among Superintendents and Central Office Leaders for Catholic Education

Congratulations and best wishes to the following recently appointed (arch)diocesan superintendents and central office leaders:

Mazie McCoy

Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Amy Nall

Archdiocese of Louisville

Bishop Mario Avilés (interim)

Diocese of Brownsville

Chris Fay

Diocese of Memphis

Nikki Ford

Diocese of Salt Lake City

Linda Norman

Diocese of Santa Rosa

Angelina Schmidt (interim)

Diocese of Tucson

We honor and celebrate the years of service, witness, and formation provided by superintendents who recently left their positions, including:

Debra Haney

Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Mark Longe

Diocese of Salt Lake City

Adrian Peterson

Diocese of Santa Rosa

Sheri Dahl

Diocese of Tucson

Readers are welcome to send any updates to Fr. Ron Nuzzi ron.nuzzi@catapultlearning.com or at 330.652.7944.

Previous issues of *The Superintendent's Chronicle* dating back to Summer 2023 can be found [here](#).

New Federal Scholarship Tax Credit (FSTC) Formerly Known as ECCA

Congress recently passed and President Trump signed a new federal scholarship tax credit program as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). Though the final legislation was far from what was originally planned in the Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA), the new law does allow for a significant tax credit for contributions to qualified scholarship granting organizations (SGOs).

Much still needs to be decided, and plenty depends on the rulemaking process and guidance that is being supervised by the Department of the Treasury. Clarity is needed on many important questions, including how governors qualify SGOs for participation and even the process for governors opting into the program, which the law requires.

While a tax credit of \$1700 is a significant and potentially meaningful start to funding scholarships, many such credits will be needed to reach all of the students and families who are seeking support for educational expenses. While awaiting the rules and regulations from Treasury, educational leaders can and should be establishing SGOs and lobbying their state government officials to opt into the program. For more information on the challenges ahead see [Education Week](#) and [FundEDU](#).

New to Equitable Services?

Do you have a large number of new principals, or perhaps first-time principals? Getting up to speed about equitable services, proportionate share, meaningful and timely consultation, and delivery of services can be a challenge even for the most organized of leaders. *Equitable Education Services*, led by Henry Fortier, can be of great assistance in educating school leaders about their rights and responsibilities under the law. Henry is available for workshops, presentations, and webinars and provides a wealth of information for school leaders.

For more information, click [here](#) or reach out directly to Henry at Henry.fortier.essa@gmail.com



100th Anniversary Celebration of Pierce vs. Society of Sisters

The Council for American Private Education (CAPE) recently sponsored a symposium at The Catholic University of America in partnership with the Columbus School of Law in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Pierce vs. the Society of Sisters*.

The United States Supreme Court's decision in that case overturned an Oregon law that would have required parents to send their children to public schools, in effect banning private education. In its unanimous opinion, the Court ruled that "the child is not the mere creature of the State."

At the commemoration event, AZ Supreme Court Justice Clint Bolick gave a rousing talk on the history of the case. Notre Dame Law Professor Nicole Garnett followed with a highly informative presentation on the jurisprudence that developed in the wake of *Pierce*.

Mark Siegel with the Oregon CAPE described the situation on the ground in Oregon at the time of the case. The presentations concluded with a panel of leaders from Catholic, Islamic, and Jewish schools moderated by Elizabeth Kirk and Marc DeGirolami.

Videos of the presentations are available on the CAPE [website](#).

Catapult Learning Professional Development

Balancing academics with behavioral challenges and classroom management—particularly with varying levels of educator experience—is challenging and constantly evolving. Catapult's comprehensive program design is built for exactly these dynamics. Catapult Learning Professional Learning Tracks are designed to work seamlessly together to strengthen educators' capabilities and confidence in all aspects of teaching, learning, and development.

From classroom management strategies for marginal teachers to recent developments in the science of reading for veteran educators, Catapult pairs its best professional development opportunities with job embedded coaching, rehearsing and reinforcing new learning encountered during professional development and inservice times.

More information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).



Is the Rosary Still Relevant: Mental Health Benefits of Praying the Rosary

A recent study published in the *Journal of Religion and Health* found that the ancient Catholic devotion of praying the rosary is positively correlated with reducing depression, increasing empathy, and lowering religious struggles. The research further suggested that praying the rosary can contribute to social integration and is often associated with community and communion.

The study included over 350 participants who were actively involved in Catholic movements and devotional groups to assess the impact of praying the rosary on well-being and mental health. Over sixty percent of participants held graduate or master's degrees, challenging the assumption that traditional Catholic devotions appeal mainly to the less educated.

"Is the Rosary Still Relevant? Exploring Its Impact on Mental Health and Well-Being: A Multinational Study," by Lluís Oviedo, et al., can be found [here](#).

Frequently Requested Statistics for the Church in the United States

The official source for accurate statistics on Roman Catholicism is the Vatican's *Annuario Statisticum Ecclesiae* or the *Statistical Yearbook of the Church*. Data from 2023, copyrighted and published in 2025, is available from the Libreria Editrice Vaticana (libreriaeditricevaticana.va.it/).

In the U.S., the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University, gathers and publishes helpful data for the U.S. church. CARA's frequently requested statistics for the church in the U.S. can be found [here](#).

Public Schools Spend More Per Pupil Than Private Schools

Recent research has found that in 49 states, public schools spend more per pupil than private schools, including Catholic schools. The single outlier: Utah. Public school spending has grown so rapidly in recent years that it now exceeds the average cost of private school in every state but Utah, a new study shows.

Yet, how the money is being used – and the results it is producing – is under more scrutiny than ever as parents seek alternatives through school choice.

The contrasts are glaring: In New York, public schools spend nearly \$41,000 per student, but private school tuition averages just \$22,412, according to a study by the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs. Illinois' private tuition averages \$12,697, compared with \$29,550 in per-pupil spending at public schools. Even Massachusetts and Connecticut – home to some of the nation's most expensive and elite private schools – still spend more on public education than the average private tuition.

For a state by state analysis, see [The Heartland News](#). To read the Oklahoma study click [here](#).

Equitable Services Institutes (ESI) 2026 Dates and Locations Set

Mark your calendars. Dates for the 2026 Equitable Services Institutes have been set and, yes, there are multiple locations. To better serve educators and leaders and to minimize travel and time away, ESI 2026 will be held in two different locations.

February 23-24, 2026 in Phoenix, AZ

March 24-25, 2026 in Philadelphia, PA

Given all of the changes and challenges ongoing at the U.S. Department of Education, ESI 2026 is a timely opportunity to stay well informed about federal programs and equitable services.

Pope Leo XIV Issues His First Apostolic Exhortation: *Dilexi Te*

An apostolic exhortation is an official document of the Catholic Church, promulgated by the Holy Father to offer clarity and confirmation about the beliefs, convictions, and policies of the Catholic Church. As such, it constitutes official church teaching, worthy of our considerations, respect, and acceptance.

Addressed to all Christians worldwide and subtitled, “On Love for the Poor,” this apostolic exhortation, like many official church documents, takes its title from the first few words of the Latin version of the document. *Dilexi te* translates as “I have loved you,” and comes from the Book of Revelation 3:9. Pope Leo promulgated *Dilexi Te* on October 4, 2025, fittingly on the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, who was himself dedicated to the poor and was known as *il poverello* (the little poor one).

In a helpful précis, Our Sunday Visitor has distilled 12 quotations from the document to foster understanding and dissemination of the first teaching of the new Holy Father.

Here are 12 quotes to give a sense of what the document contains:

1. “Christian love breaks down every barrier, brings close those who were distant, unites strangers, and reconciles enemies ... Through your work, your efforts to change unjust social structures or your simple, heartfelt gesture of closeness and support, the poor will come to realize that Jesus’ words are addressed personally to each of them: “I have loved you (Rev 3:9).”

2. “This is not a matter of mere human kindness but a revelation: contact with those who are lowly and powerless is a fundamental way of encountering the Lord of history. In the poor, he continues to speak to us.”

3. “On the wounded faces of the poor, we see the suffering of the innocent and, therefore, the suffering of Christ himself.”

4. “I am convinced that the preferential choice for the poor is a source of extraordinary renewal both for the Church and for society, if we can only set ourselves free of our self-centeredness and open our ears to their cry.”

5. “A few years ago, the photo of a lifeless child lying on a Mediterranean beach caused an uproar; unfortunately, apart from some momentary outcry, similar events are becoming increasingly irrelevant and seen as marginal news items.”

6. “Works of mercy are recommended as a sign of the authenticity of worship, which, while giving praise to God, has the task of opening us to the transformation that the Spirit can bring about in us, so that we may all become an image of Christ and his mercy towards the weakest. In this sense, our relationship with the Lord, expressed in worship, also aims to free us from the risk of living our relationships according to a logic of calculation and self-interest.”

7. “The Almighty will not be outdone in generosity to those who serve the people most in need: the greater the love for the poor, the greater the reward from God.”

8. “The Church, like a mother, accompanies those who are walking. Where the world sees threats, she sees children; where walls are built, she builds bridges. She knows that her proclamation of the Gospel is credible only when it

is translated into gestures of closeness and welcome. And she knows that in every rejected migrant, it is Christ himself who knocks at the door of the community.”

9. “There is no shortage of theories attempting to justify the present state of affairs or to explain that economic thinking requires us to wait for invisible market forces to resolve everything. Nevertheless, the dignity of every human person must be respected today, not tomorrow, and the extreme poverty of all those to whom this dignity is denied should constantly weigh upon our consciences.”

10. “Growing up in precarious circumstances, learning to survive in the most adverse conditions, trusting in God with the assurance that no one else takes them seriously, and helping one another in the darkest moments, the poor have learned many things that they keep hidden in their hearts. Those of us who have not had similar experiences of living this way certainly have much to gain from the source of wisdom that is the experience of the poor.”

11. “Our love and our deepest convictions need to be continually cultivated, and we do so through our concrete actions. Remaining in the realm of ideas and theories, while failing to give them expression through frequent and practical acts of charity, will eventually cause even our most cherished hopes and aspirations to weaken and fade away.”

12. “Let me state once again that the most important way to help the disadvantaged is to assist them in finding a good job, so that they can lead a more dignified life by developing their abilities and contributing their fair share. ... On the other hand, where this is not possible, we cannot risk abandoning others to the fate of lacking the necessities for a dignified life. Consequently, almsgiving remains, for the time being, a necessary means of contact, encounter and empathy with those less fortunate.”

The full text of *Dilexi Te* can be found [here](#).

Boston College Leadership Formation Opportunity

Recruitment for the Catholic Leadership Cohort at Boston College is now open! This program supported by the Roche Center for Catholic Education builds the pipeline of leaders for our schools. To learn about the Catholic Leadership Cohort you'll find a [prospectus linked here](#) or be welcome to visit the Roche Center [website linked here](#). If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Molly McMahon <mcmahomw@bc.edu>.



A few highlights of this Master's Program in Educational Leadership and Policy from the Lynch School of Education and Human Development are:

- 20 months / 30 credits / 5 semesters (fall, spring, summer, fall, spring)
- All courses are in the evenings and online for full time working educators
- 4 retreats for spiritual leadership and personal faith formation
- Assigned an executive coach and small professional learning community for monthly coaching meetings
- Cohort model to connect and collaborate with Catholic educators nationally
- Courses focus on best practices, current research, and the pursuit of social justice
- Scholarship is available to help with the cost of the program

Thank you for helping to "build the bench" for the leadership of our Catholic schools.

New Study on Catholic Life in the United States

A recent report from the Pew Research Center subtitled, "A closer look at Catholic life in the U.S.," begins with the observation that Catholicism's roots in the United States run deep. Nearly half of U.S. adults surveyed (4750) claimed some connection to the Catholic faith. The report is based on a national survey conducted in February 2025 with more than 9000 adults, including more than 1500 Catholics. Among the findings:

- 20% of U.S. adults are Catholics: They say they are Catholic when asked about their present religion.
- 9% of U.S. adults are "cultural Catholics": They don't identify with Catholicism religiously, but they say "yes" when asked whether "aside from religion" they consider themselves Catholic in any way (for example, ethnically, culturally, or because of their family background).
- 9% are former Catholics: They neither identify as Catholic religiously nor consider themselves culturally Catholic, but they say they were raised in the Catholic faith.
- 9% are connected to Catholicism in other ways: They are not Catholic, culturally Catholic or formerly Catholic, but they have a Catholic parent, spouse or partner or they say "yes" when asked if they ever attend Catholic Mass.

Among the 20% of U.S. adults who are Catholic, some are deeply observant. For example:

- 50% say they pray daily.
- 28% attend Mass at least weekly.
- 23% go to confession with a Catholic priest at least once a year.

Altogether, 13% of American Catholics say they do all three of these things.

The full report, "47 Percent of U.S. Adults Have a Personal or Family Connection to Catholicism," by Patricia Tevington and Gregory Smith, June 16, 2025, can be found [here](#).